

LONDON BUREAU
FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE
c/o BBC MONITORING SERVICE
CAVERSHAM PARK, READING, BERKS.
RG4 8TZ

cc: c/CCS
c/MOD
c/FED

4 August 1986
MLD-6036

STAT

Chief, Operations Group

Dear Bob: Subject: Internet Staffing

1. Briggs' 16 July message on a tentative initial Internet coverage schedule reminded us of our promise in MLD-6016 of 3 April to review bureau staffing as the impact of the project becomes clearer. Although the initial schedule will have minimum impact on our workload, we anticipate increased coverage and operational complexity as the planned BBC dishes become a reality. Certainly addition of those dishes and their coverage potential will impact on bureau personnel directly and indirectly involved in Internet functions.

2. Internet Control Officer - For the bureau's Internet Control Officer, we plan to use the slot editor under the supervision of the chief editor or in his absence the senior American staff editor on duty. This person will have control of the daily fixed and ad hoc feeds in coordination with and at the direction of the Hqs Internet Control Officer. For ad hoc feeds, we plan to use the normal alert FYI format with the slug "ATTN IOC". It will then be up to Hqs IOC to contact the bureau via the order wire for live or recorded feed and appropriate adjustment of the daily schedule as warranted. From the bureau's point of view, final authority for selection and scheduling of available feeds rests with the Hqs IOC. Bureau functions will be limited to providing appropriate feeds at pre-scheduled times and alerting Hqs IOC to availability of ad hoc feeds.

3. Shift Supervisors - Actual technical operation of the Internet console for live or recorded feeds will be assigned on a rotating basis to wireroom shift supervisors (FBN-8) under direct control of the bureau Internet Control Officer but within the supervisory responsibility of the chief of the Communications Unit. Because the initial Internet relay schedule proposed in Briggs' message spans two bureau shifts 5 days a week - and will undoubtedly be expanded in time - we will need enough supervisors at the outset to cover 10 shifts a week, with some backup capability. Initially, since the proposed schedule lists only one feed by London Bureau, we could no doubt train only the five existing supervisors and have enough to handle Internet requirements; and this is probably what we will do. Later, however, as usage expands and as staffing is confronted with sudden upsurges in the number and complexity of Internet feeds, we could find ourselves short-staffed for supervisors capable of handling them. Eventually, we want to be positioned to handle Internet feeds on a 3-shift basis 7 days a week.

4. To insure adequate supervisory staffing, both initially and for later expansion, the bureau will need to add 4 shift supervisors to its present complement of 5. Though all 9 will be trained and receive experience in Internet procedures, all will continue to perform conventional shift supervisor responsibilities when not scheduled for Internet duties. We expect initially to use the equivalent of two supervisors and phase in the rest as the workload and span of Internet operations grow. All 5 current supervisors will be involved in Internet operations during the initial phase, and they should be able to handle the additional feed duties without interruption of their other communications supervisory functions. The other 4 will be activated only as Internet pressures grow.

5. I therefore request approval (and related PMCD concurrence) to upgrade 4 tape relay operator positions (HK876) to FBN-8 wireroom shift supervisor positions (HK875). This will alter the composition of the Communications Unit to 9 wireroom shift supervisors at FBN-8 and 16 tape relay operators at FBN-7 with no change in overall T/O of 27. It will establish a pool of trained, experienced Internet operators for initial planning purposes and will position us to cope with later Internet expansion as it occurs. The bureau would not use the modified supervisory structure as carte blanche for instant promotion of four relay operators; rather, it would advance only the additional supervisors required by expansion over several years, and obviously only on the basis of proven supervisory capability and Internet-related skills.

6. Tabulation Unit Staffing - Not directly related to Internet operations but required in the bureau's estimation, given the current workload and anticipated additional complexity and scope of satellite coverage, is the need for an additional assistant editor in the Tabulation Unit. The unit chief is currently tasked with the day-to-day supervision of the unit, commentary listing, the Moscow TV tape program, and cruising and coverage responsibilities. While the cruising and coverage tasks involve extensive coordination with the BBC and are primary duties, they tend to be performed on a time available basis against the pressure of competing duties. An additional assistant editor would allow the unit chief to devote more time to traditional cruising and coverage research as well as the workload stemming from increased satellite monitoring operations. I request Hqs approval to hire an additional assistant editor (FBN-6 EOD, HK864), bringing the Tabulation Unit T/O to 6. The slot would be taken from the bureau's six banked positions (HK861) without an increase in overall T/O. As you know, the Tabulation Unit runs efficiently with minimal staff intervention. This is because the unit chief, John Winship, works inordinately hard in supervising his personnel as well as pulling his share of the tabulation work. The added strength would go a long way toward refocusing his efforts on cruising and coverage matters as satellite monitoring becomes more and more complex.

7. UK Media Analyst - Finally, I request an additional media analyst in PMU (FBN-7 EOD, HK861) to handle all British media coverage (press, RTTY, TV, and possibly radio) with a second language of Italian or French or both. This would serve to regularize, centralize and expand our UK coverage - now sparse and erratic - while providing needed assistance to PMU West European language resources. The UK press coverage is presently divided - and scanted - between editorial and PMU (weekdays by PMU,

weekends by editorial). UK television is covered on an ad hoc basis depending on editorial workload and program substance as gleaned from published program schedules. This is an embarrassingly inefficient procedure given the extremely labor-intensive process of transcribing video and the limited availability of editorial manpower, not to mention the bureau's inability to cover unannounced programs of possible interest. Again, the additional slot would come from the bureau's banked positions without increasing the overall T/O, thus reducing the banked positions to four. We have looked hard at PMU staffing and know that present resources are already stretched to the limit in meeting consumer demand for West European press information. They could never cope successfully with regularized and expanded UK media coverage. The added capability would for the first time provide full coverage of the United Kingdom, a major European ally, as well as supplement the bureau's hard-pressed West European language capability to meet growing requirements. The crux is, of course, the extent to which FBIS should exploit UK media and whether or not the bureau can afford to have hard-pressed editors performing monitorial tasks. From the bureau's perspective, we need to resolve these issues and staff accordingly.

Sincerely,

/s/

[Redacted Signature]

Chief, FBIS London Bureau

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